

## RULE #2

*Be more concerned for God's glory than for your relief.*

### **Goal:**

To lead participants to shift from a self-centered to a God-centered approach to their problems by asking the question, *How can God be glorified through this situation?*

### **Introduction:**

In this second meeting you may have new attendees, so allow a brief time for introductions. Then quickly review the nature of *The Red Sea Rules* study.

For the benefit of the new ones, remind everyone that:

*As we go through our study we all have in our mind at least one challenge that we're currently facing in life. We want our time to be practical, not theoretical, so we need to focus on a real problem. Do you have your difficulty in mind? I want to ask you, are you now asking or have you recently asked the question: Why me? Why is this happening to me?*

If you as the leader are asking that question, feel free to interject your personal challenge here or use the one from the young man on page 7 of the book. The key is to give at least one example of asking why before asking the group to share. They need time to process their answer and get the courage to speak. Having given an example, now ask:

*Would someone like to tell us about your "why me" question?*

Wrap up this discussion with a conclusion like:

*I think we can all agree that asking "why me" is natural and understandable. From a biblical standpoint, though, is it the best question to ask? Tonight we're going to investigate a different question to ask in the midst of adversity: How can God be glorified through my situation? This is the second rule or second step on our journey through our Red Sea as we journey from panic to praise: Be more concerned for God's glory than for your relief. Let's return to the biblical Red Sea event.*

You're now ready to shift the emphasis from the people in the Bible to the people in the meeting and drive home Rule #2.

Let's stop here for a moment and do some soul searching. Right now in our difficulty are we using a lot of personal pronouns like I and me? What are we looking for in our pain? Answers. Relief. Would someone like to share your personal pronoun story?



## PREVIEW THE JOURNEY

Have people turn to Exodus 14. Quickly retell the story.

Tonight let's focus on Exodus 14:3–4, 10–12.

According to Exodus 14:3–4 why did God lead His people to the edge of the sea?

God intended to *get glory* or *gain honor* from the Red Sea experience. What does this mean?

After discussion you may want to summarize glory as the sum total of who God is. God's love plus power plus grace plus whatever else is true about Him equals His glory. When His characteristics are displayed in or through some event or person He is being glorified. When we praise Him for who He is we are glorifying Him.

Is God's desire to *get glory* or *gain honor* motivated by neediness, narcissism, or egomania on His part? Why or why not?

If this question is asked, please limit the discussion because it could dominate your time together. If you sense the discussion becoming too lengthy, it may help to offer a summary similar to this:

*For your benefit, God is complete in and of Himself. He needs nothing or no one to complete Him. Why then does He want to be known or glorified? For our benefit. We're created to need God for our completion. Our sins have separated us from Him. When He's glorified or made known people gravitate to Him for their own completion. So God's glory being manifested becomes a benefit to humanity. This of course is a very brief summary of a deep question.*

Based on Exodus 14:11–12 who or what were the Israelites most focused on? Remind people of the numerous occurrences of the pronoun we in this passage.

Is this self-focus understandable in the midst of pain?

According to Exodus 15:1–3 did that focus shift? If so why?



## PREPARE FOR THE JOURNEY

*The contrast between self focus and God focus is seen in other passages of Scripture as well. Let's look at some in John. 9:1–3, 11:1–4, 17–27, 12:27–28.*

You will not have time to look at all of these. Before the meeting, select the one(s) you want to use and be very familiar with the events. Make sure the class sees that in all of the examples there was a self-focus during difficulty but a desired shift to God-focus.

*Let's turn to and read Psalm 115:1. I'd like for several of us to paraphrase this verse out loud.*



## PROCEED ON THE JOURNEY

You're now ready to shift the emphasis from the people in the Bible to the people in the meeting and drive home Rule #2.

*Let's stop here for a moment and do some soul searching. Right now in our difficulty are we using a lot of personal pronouns like I and me? What are we looking for in our pain? Answers. Relief. Would someone like to share your personal pronoun story?*

*What kind of shift in focus does God want us to experience? Ideally we want to go from give me relief to God be glorified. Has someone already made this shift to God's glory? If so would you tell us how this came about?*

*I know this is not an easy transition from self to God, but it is wholly necessary on our journey. Are you willing to, by faith, say: God be gloried in my situation even though all my questions may not be answered and I may not get the type of relief I initially wanted?*



## PONDER THE JOURNEY

Encourage the group to continue to use the journal space provided in their study guide. This second step is equally as important as the first. Our focus is being transformed from self to God and self doesn't step aside easily. Encourage people to get alone with God and wrestle through these first two steps. Tell them it's OK to cry, yell, etc. Wrestling is not pretty. Many times journaling can help clarify what's going on inside of us.